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THE HOUSE *of* THE WINDS





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The House of the Winds



*"Their House is arched with azure
and carpeted by green"*

The House of the Winds

By

E. J. Brady

Author of

'The Ways of Many Waters' etc.



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The Winds

SO old they are, so young they are, whose
tuneful voices stirred

The tree-tops of Atlantis: whom skin-clad hunters heard,
And dark Accadian lovers and 'plaining poets
too,
When Thought was in her cradle and human
speech was new.

They saw Iolcos shining, the Argo by its
shore ;
They heard the Sirens calling in mythic days
of yore ;
They gave Columbus courage ; they sped
Pizarro's keel,
Before the leagues were lessened by cleaving
bows of steel.

Their House is arched with azure and carpeted
by green,
And curtained are its casements by sunlit
damascene ;

The House of the Winds

'Tis floored by Seven Oceans, whose level surface rolls

From wainscot of wide places through doorways of the Poles.

Their never-silent Voices shall e'er authentic be ;

The songs they sang to Homer they sing to you and me ;

Across the red Sahara or through the waving corn ;

At Sydney in the sunset, by Samos in the morn.

They wailed o'er Alexander, and lone and tragic cried

On stormy St Helena, the night Napoleon died ;

So fey they are, so gay they are, whose constant songs are sung

In tunes of ev'ry Music, in words of ev'ry tongue.

We hear them in our cradles, and when the Shadows fall,

Their Message of Departure these fateful Harpers call :

The Winds

A rose song in the morning, at noon a wild
delight,

But low among the cypress the Four Winds
toll at Night.

They played in purple Baalbec among the
brown slave's curls,

They whispered lovers' greetings to swart
Assyrian girls;

They walked before the Pharaohs ; they rode
with Sheba's pride,

And by the car of Cæsar, and Tamerlane beside.

They dwelled amid the splendour and panoply
of Rome ;

They bore the Normans over and led the
Vikings home ;

They lured the Norse to Greenland, they led
the Moors to Spain ;

They sped the Knights of Cortez a-down the
Western Main.

And don and devil dared them, and greasy
traders prayed ;

And priests and pirates clamoured their mercies
or their aid.

The House of the Winds

They slew the strong Armada, and answered
to the quest
Of martyrs, rogues and rovers who journeyed
South and West.

Though now a Fleet of Iron their olden func-
tion fills,
No field shall fruit without them, without them
no man tills ;
With rain they gladden gardens, in sweetness
keep the sea,
Till Time's Long Epic endeth, and Men no
more may be.

So olden be, yet golden be, these Singers aye
unseen,
Who shout above the thunder, who whisper
songs serene ;
Who walk this planet's pathways, with fruitfulness
behind,
Who sweep the House Terrestrial with besoms
of the Wind.

Sally Brown

HER sails are furled and her anchor's
down,
The lamps are lighted in Melbourne
town ;
I'll spend my money on Sally Brown,
Wey, hey !
With a shipmate true and a pound or
two,
I'll spend my money on Sally Brown,
Wey, hey, ho !

We've brought her over from Puget Sound
With her load o' Canadian pine ;
And her blue-nose mate, that's dead and
drowned,
He was never a friend of mine.

Been crimped in 'Frisco and jugged at
'Pool ;
I been stoused in a Plymouth slum ;
I've 'blued' my money and played the fool
With the Women, and Dice, and Rum.

The House of the Winds

I've smelt the bilge of a Swedish brig
Where the right whale breaches and blows ;
I've sailed in a bark of Yankee rig
To the land where the cotton grows.

I've lived in the Land o' the God-Forbid
Where hell is your daily lot ;
I sarved my time as a fo'castle kid
In the House of the God-forgot.

I've shipped with tigers and human swine ;
I've shipped with a yaller crew ;
An' Satan himself was mild and fine
To some of the mates I knew.

He led 'em all by a level mile ;
He could make it an easy win
On any track of the All-That's-Vile
On the sawdust courses o' sin.

"The seas are mine," said the Lord above
When the work o' the world began ;
He gave them Hate and He gave them Love,
Hard graft, and the Sailorman.

Sally Brown

He made them wide, and He made them deep,
With a seaport here and there,
And plenty o' rain and salt to keep
The depths and the shallows clear.

And North and South they are green and grey,
But the Middle Seas they are blue,—
We slid him out at the fall of day
When the skipper had read it through.

A blue-nosed mate with a ginger 'ead
And a squint in his ugly eye,—
The *Bluebeard's* crew, to a man, they said
It was good that the mate should die.

Aye! Dago Pete with his broken face ;
And 'Sails,' what he kicked and cowed—
I guess old 'Sails' took heart o' grace
When he stitched him into his shroud—

And Boozer Bill, from the State o' Maine ;
Old Pat and Antonio ;
That partin' brought 'em no grief or pain ;
They all had their marks to show.

The House of the Winds

He hazed us out o' the bloomin' Bay
Till we lifted the Southern light :
He hazed the watch through the livelong day
And he made a hell of the Night.

It was 'dargs' and 'skulkers' and 'hogs'
and 'skunks' ;
And sorrow and sweating and curse ;
Till we dreamt at night in our crowded bunks
Of his sudden death—and worse.

.
His soul was posted as overdue
At the homing Port o' Hell.
A block in a way that blocks *will* do
From 'er crosstrees somehow . . . fell!

He sprawled the deck like a stricken bull
To the lilt of a ten-knot breeze ;
With the canvas drawing free and full
As she parted the combing seas.

Her planks were splashed and spattered and
red,
Till we scraped 'em with holystone.
It ketched him fair on his ginger 'ead
And he went with 'ardly a moan !

Sally Brown

He lived a dog, an' a dog he died ;
I watched him a-sinking down,
As we put him over the *Bluebird's* side
On the road to Melbourne town.

Now Dago Pete he will find a girl,
Antonio 'blue in' his gain ;
And Pat get drunk as an Irish earl,
With Bill from the State o' Maine.

We've brought her over from Puget Sound
With her load o' Canadian pine ;
That blue-nose mate that is dead an' drowned
He was never a friend o' mine.

*The Bluebird's anchor is out and down ;
The girls are waiting in Melbourne town ;
I'll spend my money on Sally Brown,
Wey, hey !*

*With a messmate true and a pound to 'blue,'
I'll spend my money on Sallee Brown,
Wey, hey, ho !*

Trade

TWO thousand years of the Christian
creed, and a thousand years before,
Spewing their cargoes out on the quays,
re-gorging their holds once more,
Over the rolling Seas of the World, wherever
its ports are laid,
They come and go with a royal show, the
Ships of the Merchant Trade.

The timid tubs of an early day, they hurriedly
plied their oars ;
For dragons dwelled in the waters then, and
demons by the shores ;
And Circe lilting a magic strain in her isle
enchanted knew
How a little soft song will ne'er go wrong with
a sour, sea-wearied crew.

The Cyclops haunted their working hours, with
the Gorgons grim and dread ;
And every ninth wave threatened death ; and
the storm fiends overhead

Trade

Their dreams beset with sea-born beasts ; nor
ever a man might know

If a wanton sprite some evil spite was devilling
down below.

But—daring the chance of dangers dire, in the
years beyond the years,

The Giants who dwelled in the Dark of Things,
the myths and the olden fears ;

They laboured their loadings out and home that
the profits might be made—

For, old or new, this story is true, that trade
for ever is—trade.

Ay, the bills of lading, notched on staves by
the skin-clad hirelings, told

The consignees how their cargoes lay in the
skin kayaks of old ;

As the bricks they baked in Babylon, or
scribed on papyrus,

Or the printed bills the type girl fills, are telling
to-day to us.

The portly merchant of Sidon town most
certainly had no thought

That a future day would classic deem the goods
that he sold and bought.

The House of the Winds

He invoiced Carthage, at market rates, collected
his cash when due,
Complained of the shameful waste of stores,
and probably starved the crew.

And if it chanced that a Tuscan thief, in his
prowling galley free,
Consigned the goods to his private horde, the
company to the sea,
That portly owner of Sidon town anathematized
the Fates,
And sent a load by another road, and charged
'em at double rates.

While Plato dreamed of his perfect State, and
Cæsar of his Crown,
The trading ships of the ancient time were
travelling up and down
With the corn and oil and clothes and drink,
and the simple mundane things
Of work and play in the every-day—which
rarely a poet sings.

The high-decked hulls of the Kentish ports in
a later fashion went
With their English wool to feed, in course, the
looms of the Continent ;

Trade

Then haled them home with the Flemish cloth
and the wines of Gascony,
That the Saxon maids and their Norman blades
might clothed and couraged be.

But wider the world began to grow, and always
the distance less—

Though the world to-day is a narrow place to
the world of good Queen Bess.

For all its rovers are sleeping sound, nor over
the Spanish Main

Shall the *Golden Hind* set sail to find adventure
and spoil again.

For the English King wears an Alpine hat—
they haven't a king in France—

And the shipping rings have sounded far the
death of the old Romance ;

Now the Kentish ships are manned by Hans
and Pedro and Yonson blonde ;

And the wond'rous sea Columbus dared is only
' The Herring Pond.'

And over the Transatlantic wire (soon to be
' out of use')

The wireless flashes the liner swift her budget
of daily news.

The House of the Winds

Anon, 'twill patter the price of stocks to the
flying Ships of Air
To keep in touch with the Wall-street bears,
the travelling millionaire.

So over the years and down the years, till the
suns and stars grow cold,
Till all the waters of all the world are backward
in chaos rolled,
Till Gabriel's trump shall call them up who
under the seas are laid,
To the east and west the worst and best shall
follow the tracks of trade.

A hundred Cæsars may come and go, or a
thousand Shakespeares shine ;
A hundred Brownings singing of Art, a hundred
Omars of Wine ;
The Ledger stands where the Ledger stood,
nor ever its voice gainsaid
On earth shall be by the land or sea, while
trade for ever is—trade.

Otahai

ON the beach at Otahai
You remember, you and I,
And the rollers on the bars,
And the moonlight and the stars—
On that beach at Otahai
You'll remember—you and I.

What's the use a sailor loving,
Round the world for ever roving?
What's the use to think or care,
Keep or lose or hold or share?
What's the use to laugh or sing,
What's the good of anything?

But the wind was in your hair,
And your face was sunset fair,
And I saw the starlit skies
Mirrored in your dreaming eyes,
As the night went laughing by
On that beach at Otahai.

Then the leaves like lace hung down
From the sleeping palm tree's crown;

The House of the Winds

Then we heard the sea birds call,
Heard the night tide rise and fall—
Loving, dreaming, you and I,
On the beach at Otahai.

Ah! that warm, white night perfumed
When the rollers broke and boomed,
When our hearts were beating so,
Ah! that night of long ago!
Ah! that night—and you and I
On the beach at Otahai!

Still the palm trees dance and sway
In the moonlight far away;
Still the sea birds dip and call,
Still the long tides rise and fall,
Still the laughing night goes by
On the beach at Otahai.

Life is ashes! Even so,
For that night of long ago
All the days I have to live,
Ah, so freely would I give—
For that night and you and I
On the beach at Otahai.

Otahai

What's the use a sailor loving,
Round the world for ever roving?
What's the good to laugh or sing?
What's the good to-day, to-morrow,
Life or Death, or Joy or Sorrow—
What's the good of anything?

Something at the Yard-arm

THERE'S something at the yard-
arm

That's swinging to and fro ;
There's something at the yard-arm—
The drums are beating slow.
They swung it to the yard-arm
Alive a while ago ;
They hung it to the yard-arm
For all the fleet to know.

What is it rocks so gently,
Tarpaulin, can you see ?
What is it swings so slowly
Above the sunlit sea ?
A messmate's hanging yonder
Upon the gallows-tree,
Oh, high it's hanging yonder—
The corpse of Mutiny.

There's something at the yard-arm
That dips to every roll,
With muffled drums a-beating
Instead of bells to toll.

Something at the Yard-arm

There's something at the yard-arm
That answers every roll ;
The Admiral is watching,
Black anger in his soul.

The Provost Marshal's wiping
The sweat from off his face ;
The man beside the yard-rope
He staggers in his place ;
The Captain's walking hurried
And stepping out of pace ;
The Chaplain by the cat-head
Is moving God for grace.

What is it in the hammock,
Tarpaulin, can you see ?
What is it in the hammock
That lifts so heavily ?
A dead man's in his hammock,
And evermore to be
Between the round shot lying
Asleep beneath the sea.

There's something at the yard-arm
That's hanging high and white ;
The middle watch that saw it
Is cursing in affright !

The House of the Winds

There's something at the yard-arm

A-swinging all the night ;

There's something at the yard-arm—

God send the morning light !

Ice Virgins

PALE virgins of the Arctic,
They pulse across the tides
To meet the lords Antarctic
Who fain would make them brides.

The wicked White Fox spied them
Beyond the Frozen Sea,
With but dim Night to hide them,
Still sleeping nakedly.

A woman-seal, bewailing
Her dead cub in the floe,
Saw one tall wanton sailing
Out South'ard through the snow.

Down by the Crozets lying—
Storm-stricken on the waste—
In weedy seas slow dying
Her twin berg bids her haste.

A man-seal strangely bleeding
Beneath the midnight sun
Beheld him proudly speeding
Toward far Septentrion.

The House of the Winds

Long, long he fared and sought her
From realms of Night and Fire,
The grey North's gracious daughter—
His lily of desire.

The clumsy cow-whale, giving
A great dug to her calf,
Breaks surges unforgiving
That built his cenotaph.

The petrel heard him groaning,
The penguin saw him die,
The dovebies mock her moaning,
The daft auks watch her by.

Now, in their bride-robcs biding
Throng down her sisters tall,
Whose lords-elect are chiding,
Whose waiting bridegrooms call.

In vain their mad dams stayed them—
The painted glaciers these,
Who on their cold breasts laid them
Through aching centuries.

Ice Virgins

Once came the Vikings sweeping—
Red fell the clean snows then—
Once came the long ships leaping
Of swart Basque sailor-men ;

Once came John Cabot, sailing
Nor'-West for rich Cathay ;
Once Baffin's tub turned trailing
A-leak to Melville Bay.

Came Ghosts—of Hudson steering
To skirt the—Middle Ice ;
Came Shades—of Franklin, Behring,
First Sons of Sacrifice.

What heed these white maids, burning,
Who sweep by Cape Farewell ?
What heeds the Earth-maid, yearning,
Doomstruck ?—Love legends tell.

The ice-blink fadeth faster
From strange green water-skies ;
Each berg her lot has cast her
Where now her love-lot lies.

The House of the Winds

Fierce Southern Seas enfold them,
Torn from their glacial shore,
And strong-armed breakers hold them
A-dreaming evermore.

Yon' wings the fond she-eider,
Yon' creeps the lone white hare,
And with her cubs beside her
Slow hunts the Polar bear.

Bejewelled charms revealing,
Pink harlots they at noon,
But sinless ladies stealing
Soft homeward in the moon.

So comes the King-berg Nor'ward
To seek his love again ;
So goes the Queen-berg forward,
Amort and all in vain.

She at the Grand Bank dieth,
Who thus the Sun-god dares ;
He, worn and wasted, lieth
A-dying at the Snares.

Ice Virgins

He may not kiss his rover,
The warm blue seas between ;
She may not clasp her lover,
Nor be his Boreal Queen.

They greet not, meet not ever ;
They touch not mouth to mouth,
Who still go North for ever,
For ever who go South.

The Dead Ships

SOUND, sleeping sound, with their sere
sails rotting round,
On their bleached beds down below,
By a viscid seaweed slimed, by a hoar ooze
whitely rimed,
Lie low, the drown'd dead ships lie low.
All dreaming of the dockyards,
All longing for the quays ;
Where the living ships yet come and
go,
Still waiting for the south wind,
Still watching for the tides,
And the cheery sailor lad's ye-ho.

Deep, crowded deep, where the clammy sea-
slugs creep,
And the polyp builds and bores,
Turn the traders in their grief, groan the gun-
ships on the reef,
Roll the frigates on the floors.
Oh, the gunship hears the stroke
Of the round-shot through the oak,

The Dead Ships

And the shouting and the cheering of the
boarders dashing down.

But the tradeship's gentle soul
Loves the tender lap and roll
Of the white-caps making music on the road
to London town.

Low, sleeping low, as the live ships come and
go, in their tarnished, torn attire,
They who swung from London town, they
who took the purple down
Into Carthage out of Tyre.

Oh, the gilded barge of Cæsar! Oh, the
cohorts golden-mailed!

But, oh, the green Iolcos on the morn that
Jason sailed!

Dreams, dreaming dreams, lie the Suffete's
proud triremes

In their silted Punic bays,
And a tramp hulk rests beside with the glory
and the pride
Of the Doges and the Deys.

How fares it with the Builders who wrought
so lovingly?

The House of the Winds

What aileth, then, the Builders, that they thus
quiet be?

Nay, ask the brown mounds yonder, I pray ye
ask not me.

Far, rocking far, grinds the galleon on the
bar

When the night winds moan and cry ;
'Tween her curved ribs—shotted yet—
Culverin and falconet,
With the linstocks rusting by.

Ho, Master Thomas Fleming,
Why swings your mains'l round?
The great Armada's coming
Up Channel, inward bound,
And I've brave news to carry
This morn to Plymouth Sound.

Sore, smitten sore, by a jagged saw-toothed
shore,

By the broadswords of the waves,
With their spewed freights rotting
slow

While the live ships come and go,
Dream the dead ships in their graves.

The Dead Ships

Out of darkness, out of light, slain at noon-
time, killed at night,

By wrack, by fire, by wound untold—

 In his eyes her blind eyes stare,

 On her fleshless fingers there—

See! love-locked yet—the hoop of gold!

Grey, waiting grey, for the Trump of Judg-
ment Day,

Where the gorged seas groaning spread,

 Lie the Lost Fleets biding deep,

 Lie the Squadrons all asleep,

 Lie the Squadrons of the Dead!

Jack Marlin

NOW at the window, side by side,
We sit and take our ease,
And watch the ebb and flow of tide
That sweetens all the seas.

His face is in the twilight glow,
His teeth a pipe between—
A sailor of the years ago,
An old man grey and lean.

He knew the Western waterways
Before the whirling screw ;
The clippers of the sailing days,
In all their pride, he knew.

Jack Marlin's voice is harsh and shrill,
But as he hoarsely sings,
I see the grand old vessels fill
Their white, outspreading wings.

I hear his long-dead messmates round
A rusty capstan go ;
I hear the songs of ' Homeward Bound,'
The song of ' Lowland's Low.'

Jack Marlin

I hear the cotton chanteys ring,
And, out across the bars,
I see the Black-ball flyers fling
Their topmasts to the stars.

The Indi'man she tacks and wears
O'er heaving miles of foam ;
The Bristol trader humbly bears
Her owner's cargoes home.

The riding lamps glint through the rain
Where in their roadsteads lie
The timid hulls of Trade again—
As in the nights gone by.

Aye, in the nights their rain-wet spars
Loom high and strange, I ween,
When out beyond the crooning bars,
The seabirds call unseen.

.

The light has faded from the west
And o'er a shadowed sea,
With black wings folded on her breast,
Night broods—and mystery.

The House of the Winds

Jack Marlin, with the rising moon
Is singing, hoarse and low,
Strange words to some forgotten tune
Of fifty years ago!

The Pilot

A LERT and ever ready—all ship-shape,
trim and bright,
A stout boat on the davits hung well
out by day and night—
The Pilot, at her moorings, swings restless
with the tide,
As if she knew and envied the company out-
side.

All times the look-out hearkens—his functions
to fulfil—
To voice of lamp and bunting high up on
Signal Hill,
A red light, at her masthead, burns through
the night alway,
When all good folk are dreaming in all the
world away.

Oft, drowsily digesting the thoughts of need
and deed,
When midnight turns toward morning, I hear
a shrill, 'Proceed !'

The House of the Winds

In half-awakened fancy—while good folk keep
their beds—

I glimpse some inward Argo awaiting off the
Heads.

Perchance a lumber schooner, from Puget with
her load,

That aids the builder finish a city man's abode.
Across the vast Pacific from 'Bear' to 'Cross'
she's swung

To shout of loud sea orders and rolling chanteys
sung.

Across the wondrous ocean that proud Pizarro
hailed,

A hard-faced Yankee skipper successfully hath
sailed.

His bo'sun from New Bedford ; his mate, who,
doubtless, too

Could curse in seven lingoos and 'haze' a
sullen crew.

To-night they'll hit the city with money in the
purse,

And seek their recreation for better or for
worse ;

The Pilot

They'll walk with fickle Phryne ; with Bacchus
sally forth

To booze in classic Pymont and brawl in
George-street North.

We trust this briny ballad, uncultured, will not
shock

The beaux who air their graces to belles of
four o'clock.

Our Jacks are not the fashion, no social circles
know

The slaves of seven oceans who drink a while
and go.

They get no band to cheer them, no toast
artistic brown,

No waiting maids in muslin to bring the tea-
trays down ;

They meet no gay acquaintance with jovial
quip and grin

Who run the 'rolling forties' and fetch the
cargoes in.

Perchance a stately liner the Pilot proudly waits—
A tall, important stranger, who calls without
the Gates.

The House of the Winds

Ah, here the picture changes! Now madame
need not fear—

A liner's manner's perfect; *her* morals are not
queer.

A diva and a doctor, a maestro from Milan,
A baronet (in knickers), a bishop, saintly
man,

Whose thirst is quenched with Moet; how
shocked he'd surely be
To hear they had no stewards upon Lake
Galilee!

Gilt mouldings in the state rooms, in evening
dress to dine,

A pianola playing, and ladies, love and wine—
So comes the floating palace, and, if I dream
aright,

Her steerage and her stokehold are somewhere
out of sight.

When Gabo in the winter is warding off the
blows

Of giant winds that, cradled in dark Antarctic
snows,

The Pilot

Come tearing up from Tasman, the Pilot in his
place

Awaits the call of duty, unruffled, blithe of face.

'Tis choppy down the harbour ; there's surf on
Middle Head ;

The coasters run for shelter, the sky is roofed
with lead ;

The rollers break in thunder, and flying spume
and spray

Go drifting o'er the headlands of wind-swept
Watson's Bay.

Naught heed these sturdy sea-dogs — ex-
skippers, bluff and strong,

Who make the Pilot Service that helps the
world along,

The bells below are clanging ; a waiting ship's
in need—

Run up your bit o' bunting ! And let the boat
proceed !

She drops her harbour moorings, the smoke
pours out a-lee,

She dances to the music and dares the combing
sea ;

The House of the Winds

And if her boats won't live it, he'll signal o'er
the foam

To bid the stranger 'Follow'—and lead him
safely home.

So dapper and so steady, so neat, alert and gay—
'Tis good to see the Pilot on watch by night
and day.

And glad are they to greet him, the skippers
and their crews,
To help him o'er the taffrail and get his latest
news.

The first to say 'Good-morrow,' the last to
bid 'Good-bye,'

Whatever port they hail from, whatever flag
they fly ;

He sets them on the high road, their homeward
coasts to win ;

He meets them in the offing and brings them
surely in.

All pilots go to Heaven, as ev'ry seaman
knows ;

No matter what his failings, nor yet how bad
his clothes.

The Pilot

No pilot ever reaches the Port of Pitch and
Flame,
For Charon takes him over ; and Charon
knows the game !

Homing Chantey

O H, swinging down the Western Main,
And roaring round the Horn,
We'll bring her to the docks again

With California's corn—

Home in the summer-time,
Home in the summer-time,
Our good ship has to be ;
Old 'Stormy's' dead and in his bed,
And all the winds are free.

Her bowsprit, like an albatross,
Goes wheeling to the sky :
We'll raise the Bear and sink the Cross
Before the doldrums die—

Home in the summer-time,
Home in the summer-time,
Back from the Golden Gate,
With cash to 'blue' on Sis and Sue,
A wedding ring for Kate.

You'll get your pay, and I'll get mine—
The tree must bear its fruits,
And four lean months upon the brine,
"Pay—Paddy Doyle for his boots"—

Homing Chantey

Home in the summer-time,
Home in the summer-time,
From San Francisco quays ;
Fo'castle Jack has laboured back
Over the hung'ring seas.

Oh, sing my lads! The tall Azores
Sink in the sunset down—
Oh, sing my lads, the white chalk shores
That lead to London town!
Home in the summer-time,
Home in the summer-time,
Our good ship has to be ;
For Sis and Sue they wait for you,
And my Kate waits for me!

Retired

HE owns a little villa
Beside the Sydney shore,
This grizzled, grey old skipper,
Retired, and sixty-four.

I often see him sitting
On his verandah chair,
The sea-wind gently blowing
About his foam-white hair.

Before him spreads the Harbour,
And, telescope to eye,
He watches, late and early,
The ship-procession by.

And spar and mast and funnel,
And engine, sail and screw,
They speak to him the language
Of that great world he knew.

They tell him of the countries
That lie so far away ;
The messmates and the cronies
Of his departed day.

Retired

His wife is sleeping yonder,
He laid her down at sea ;
A long-gone captain's daughter,
A captain's darling she.

And oft, I know, his glasses
Grow filmy with the dim,
Sad memories and longings
The brave ships bring to him.

He knows them all by number,
And most he knows by name ;
The whither of their going,
The whence their cargoes came.

And oft I see him passing
His hand across his eyes,
When hoot the outward sirens
And high Blue Peter flies.

The ports that they are bound for—
Ah, these he knows right well,
The light and buoy and beacon,
The foghorn and the bell.

The House of the Winds

He sees, in mind, the coastline,
He sees the storm-swept bay,
And down the foggy channel
He feels a cautious way.

He sees the docks of London,
Where once his lading he
To cheer his merchant owners
Delivered faithfully.

In dreams he sees the Indies,
In dreams he doth behold
The coasts of California,
The fevered Coasts of Gold.

The Cape and Horn, in fancy,
He beats around again,
In sunshine and in starshine,
In clear and calm and rain.

The clipper roads, he knew them,
The infant days of Steam—
And ships, long dead, forgotten,
Go drifting through his dream.

Retired

Along that wide verandah
He paces to and fro ;
And with him walk the shipmates
Of years and years ago.

He hears the homing chanteys,
And on the poop he stands,
With ready crew beneath him
To follow his commands.

He dresses and he strips her,
He lays her course once more
From Boston to the Foreland,
From 'Frisco to the Nore.

I doubt not he is ready
His final Port to win ;
I doubt not that St Peter
Will let the old man in.

His papers all in order ;
His manifest clear writ,
With many goodly items
Set down, in gold, on it.

The House of the Winds

One day he'll take his passage
To that Uncharted Shore
Whence neither crew nor captain
Re-voyage evermore.

Bread and Bunk and Beer

THE Captains got the credit,
The claret and the crowns ;
Their ladies laid in laces,
And walked in 'broidered gowns.
Throughout 'Our Splendid Story'
Their fame is blazoned clear.
But barren bays of glory
Were theirs whose labours gory
Bought Bread and Bunk and Beer.

They sickened in foul cockpits,
They sweated at the sheets,
The gleanings of the village,
The harvest of the streets—
A press-gang's squalid mintage
('Our Splendid Story ' runs),
But heroes in the vintage,
Who poured, with no mean stintage,
Their blood before the guns.

Sour gallows-fruit plucked seaward—
That might have ripened anon—
They laid their hulks like Vikings
Beside the galleon ;

The House of the Winds

With ruffian courage cheering
 When crashing broadsides woke ;
Their ribald jowls appearing
At splintered port-holes ; jeering
 At Death across the smoke.

The quarter-deckers, o'er them,
 Should bloody efforts fruit,
Would take the cream of glory,
 The lion's share of loot
And limelight in dispatches—
 But, showing mickle fear
Of mortal wounds or scratches,
Below they plied the matches
 For Beef and Bunk and Beer.

They manned the merchant service,
 As yet to-day they do,
Crimped, duped or belly-driven
 To make a deep-sea crew ;
With Three-toed Pete, the Dago,
 Red Hans and Nigger Joe,
Black Juan of Santiago
And all the scum that may go
 The roads the deep tanks know.

Bread and Bunk and Beer

In dripping, damp sou'westers,
In greasy dungarees,
They fetch a nation's commerce
Across the hungry seas ;
Yea—sinners sair but canty—
Pig-iron, pork and pearls,
They freight with shout and chanty
For silver small and scanty
To spend among the girls.

Their epitaphs are written—
Among the ooze and slime—
A nameless, fameless Legion
Evanished into Time.
Unplaced among the planners
Of Empire high and strong,
Despite their godless manners
They bore her blood-red banners
The utmost Seas along.

They drudged, they fought, they famished—
Raw wounds and death for gain—
That ships might outward journey,
And eke come home again ;

The House of the Winds

A feckless host, hard-faring,
God ease their souls of sin,
And grant them for their daring,
Full meed of rest un-wearing,
The hollow seas within !

A requiem yet the surges
For these hard lives shall sing,
When o'er the Seven Oceans
A thousand airships wing ;
And down far Time-Tracks hoary
The Seas will thunder clear,
The worth in human story
Of these, whose gain and glory
Was Bed and Beef and Beer.

The Ship *Romance*

OUTSIDE 'tis gold and azure ;
 Within 'tis grey and green—
 The brave high headlands rearing
 Their fortress'd bulk between.

The gates stand ever opened,
 And lo! the ships go down,
Like black swans veering seaward
 To 'scape the crowded town.

Like white swans faring homeward
 The inward ships come o'er,
To fold their tired wings softly
 A season by the shore.

Thy blue-eyed baby crooning
 Its wonder and delight,
Shall ask thee whither go they,
 The black swans and the white.

“The white swan-ships, beloved,
 That through the morn have gone,
Sail out”—so wilt thou whisper—
 “To far-off Avalon.

The House of the Winds

“ Their good knights’ shining falchions,
With hilts of fairy gold,
In yonder sunburst gleaming
Thou mayest yet behold.

“ With red hearts fiercely burning
Beneath their breasts of steel,
That wicked, wanton merman
Who slew the pure white seal,

“ Those black sea-knights thou sawest
Ride nobly down the bay
To-night have gone a-seeking
In lone seas far away.

“ Their ways, O heart’s delight, are
Most wondrous to pursue,
And val’rous, brave and splendid
With deeds of derring-do.

“ And they shall see the Rainbow
That rings the Midnight Sun,
And hear the Phoenix singing
Before their task is done.”

.

The Ship *Romance*

What though that fabled Island
Lies deep beneath the Sea?
What though that wicked Merman
A stout Ship-owner be?

In dreams the Fleets of Childhood
Sail back a thousand years
To coasts of strange old fancies
And strangely sweet old fears ;

And, bound for fair Atlantis
From out the port of Chance—
For Poet, Child and Woman
Still sails the ship *Romance*.

Southerly

O H, North and East from Conran,
The heel of old Cape Howe
Upon his worn foundations
Is planted firmly now.

For loud Antarctic weather
Beats on his seaward gates ;
And Wind and Sea together
Race home from Bass's Straits.

Scared ketches out of Marlo,
Drenched by a stinging spray,
Run hard to make their shelter,
Ere night, at Twofold Bay.

The freighted coasters stagger
Half-buried in the boil ;
They slow their groaning engines
And lamely south'ard toil.

The liner makes her offing,
And, proud in strong disdain,
Defies the fighting furies
That pound her sides in vain.

Southerly

Close-reefed, a Glasgow clipper,
Along a path of foam,
With all the gale behind her,
Is racing gaily home.

'Stand off!' the signals order,
'Stand off!' and beat away;
The bars, with white teeth snarling,
Are growling Death to-day!

On high Shoalhaven forelands,
And down by Wollongong,
The green seas shout and thunder
Their wildest Wagner song.

From Schank to Port Macquarie
The mad white horses speed;
The coasts are wet with spindrift
From Wilson's to the Tweed.

The seabird, shoreward driven,
To all the world protests;
The swans complaining cover
Their fledglings in the nests.

The House of the Winds

Across the Southern Ocean,
Along the Tasman Sea,
Each lighthouse-keeper holdeth
His charges warily.

Hard mates their decks are pacing,
And anxious skippers dart
Quick glances from the shoreline
Unto the open chart.

One eye upon his compass,
Firm poised on inward heel,
The steersman's hands of iron
Are clamped about the wheel.

Gaunt bergs and groaning glaciers,
Floe ice and fogs and snows
By red volcanoes lighted,
This howling South Wind knows.

From that lone land untrodden
That rings the mystic Pole,
He comes with strange, wild anger
Within his boreal soul.

Southerly

He leaves, to mark his going,
Brown weed and kelp upturn,
And driftwood on the beaches
That front a clearer morn.

And wreckage, slowly rising
And falling in the swell,
To-morrow, at the dawning,
Its own drear tale will tell.

The bruised ships, death-delivered,
Replace their riven spars,
And clean tides freshly enter
Across re-opened bars.

Once more a cloudless, splendid
Blue arch beams overhead,
And all the seas are grateful
The wild South Wind is dead.

A Sea Phantasy

FOUR-FIFTHS of the World are water
yet ; four-fifths of a Man the same ;
The First Life Cell from the Primal
Sea, to mother all kingdoms came.
If I but saw with the mollusc's eyes, and
thought with a human brain,
I'd read, mayhap, the Riddle of Why, and
utter its meaning plain.

This is the wisdom of all the Books ; the learn-
ing of all the Schools ;
A fifth of the globe is habitat for millions of,
mostly—fools :
Only a fifth for the foot of Man ; but out where
the right whale goes,
Four times as wide, lies an under-world that
nobody sees—or knows !

Under the lighted glass of the Sea, below in
the worlds unseen,
Lieth an Asia yet unmapped and a Europe
submarine.

A Sea Phantasy

A second's swing of the Planet's pole, the pull
of an asteroid,
And a new Atlantis might arise—an Asia sink
in the void.

Far is the boundary fence of Time. Shall ever
the world be sure
The chance and change of a million years will
cease for a hundred more?
If we had seen as the Dinosaur and spake with
a human tongue,
What tales of the æons past and gone would
surely be scribed and sung!

The polyyps building their continents, in the
Scheme and Plan of Things,
A greater value in sooth may have than ever a
bard who sings;
And who shall say but the alga dark that under
the salt wave grows
Holds equal grace in the Maker's eyes with the
fairest garden rose?

Old is the story of Ocean; old, in the further
Eocene,

The House of the Winds

When fiery mountain and quaking hills bom-
barded its margins green ;
The waters then are the waters now, with little
of loss or gain ;
But age by age have the lands been changed and
risen and sunk again.

Four-fifths of a world for level plain, and a fifth
of wrinkled crust,
To tell its story in broken lines of effort, failure
and dust ;
A fifth to carry the Race of Men, but four for
the sweep of Tides,
And so the Ship of the World through Space,
with the Cosmic Squadron rides !

The Pioneer

HE stands beside the wind-swept
verge,
The Flint Age just begun,
He sees the grey, incoming surge
Grow red beneath the sun ;
The primal seas before him hold
What danger and what fear,
This builder of the æons old,
This Shipwright Pioneer ?

His knotted hands, with stone and fire
In cloud and shine have wrought
Through days of failure and desire
The rude inventor's thought—
A tattooed chief, long ages sunk
In far, forgotten night,
Who chose the bole and felled the trunk
And paced its length aright.

His auroch's tooth and mammoth tusk,
And greenstone axe have done
Slow service in the falling dusk
And with the lifted sun ;

The House of the Winds

The sweat of toil, uncouth, sublime,
Has drenched his bare limbs o'er—
This workman in the dawn of Time,
This Titan by the shore.

A Fulton in a wolf-skin dress,
Whose fame no legends tell,
Through travail vast and hourly stress
He held his purpose well.
Bull-chested, savage, heavy-limbed,
Barbaric, past, remote,
His fame in fitting voice is hymned
From ev'ry storm wind's throat.

The twin screw sings his work divine
Across a peopled sea ;
From Greenland to the circling line
Who worthier than he ?
The turbine's shaft shall call his deed
Above the charted floors,
And, city-sown, they'll grant him meed
Of praise, the thousand shores.

Homeric in the Dawn he stands ;
Wild triumph lights his face ;
The Key of Distance in his hands—
An Overlord of Space,

The Pioneer

Eyes shaded by a palm of might,
Peering the level plain—
Out from the World's Primæval Night
He glares, and sinks again !

Builder was he ere Asia knew
Aught of Accadian tents :
Builder was he ere Egypt grew
Skilled in the rudiments.
Master of Craft ere Rome and Tyre
Sprang from their swamp and fen,
Pointing with flint and bone and fire
The way for sailor-men.

A gaunt Columbus in the weird,
Lost infancy of Man,
For him no sculptured stone was reared
By tutored sept or clan,
Painter and sculptor, caid and sage
Owe him neglected praise—
Lord of the Neolithic Age
And Captain of the Ways.

Burnt is his spark ; gone down, long sped
Into unheeded night ;
Dust are his hands, but still men tread
The vintage of their might.

The House of the Winds

Haply to-day some shipyard looms,
Potent with force accrued,
And loud Invention clangs and booms
Where lay his dug-out rude.

Haply the strong cranes lift and bear
Masses of structure shaped
Hard by the salted margins, where
He hewed, and chipped, and scraped ;
Boiler and bulkhead, beam and mast,
Crank and propeller blade,
Swing to their place appointed fast,
All for the good of Trade.

Surely his spirit somewhere hears,
Out in the vastness wide,
Echoes faint of the Newer Years,
Borne o'er the roaring tide.
Surely the white electric gleam
Cleaving the darkness, yet
Lights with its slow, revolving beam,
This strange sea silhouette :

*Framed by a night cloud drooping low,
Dark and obscurely dim,
Paddling his frail boat hard and slow,
Out at the dark sea rim—*

The Pioneer

*Once in a hundred years perchance
A watcher by the sea,
One fleeting second's space may glance
An Ancient Mystery.*

*Bull-chested, bared to combat new,
Soaked with the driving spray,
Muscle and sinew, bone and thew
Fighting their onward way ;
Holding the sure coast close inboard,
Hugging the solid shore—
Passeth the great Sea's Primal Lord
Into the Nevermore.*

Father of Builders—as he fades
Over the tither side,
A liner huge with whirling blades
Cleaves outward in her pride !
Father of Sailors—as his ghost
Mists at the rising moon,
Comes the sound of ' Washington Post '
Played in her grand saloon !

‘Let Go For’ard!’

I AM 'elpless in me bunk,
Oh, I'm dilly an' I'm drunk,
An' I'm bruised an' black an' sore ;
I've had a rotten time,
An' the winch she sez, in rhyme,
“I—won't—get—drunk—any—more.”

But I listen for the word
That before I've often 'eard :
It is sweeter in me ear
Than the chorus risin' clear
Of a skylark on the wing :
“Let go for'ard !
Let go for'ard ! . . .
Get a heave upon the spring !”

Now the row is done at last,
An' they've got the lashin's fast ;
I can feel the joyful thud
Of 'er screw above the mud—
Though me soul an' body's sore,
I'm another kind o' man,
I'm a real good doer—an'
I—won't—get—drunk—any—more.

‘ Let Go For’ard ! ’

I’ll be ‘eavin’ of the log,
I’ll be scoffin’ of me prog,
An’ the battered thing that’s me,
Will be Johnny Jones, A.B.—

In the mornin’ I’ll be fit,

“ Let go for’ard !

Let go for’ard !

Take a heave upon the spring,
Get the gangway in a sling—

We ‘ave ‘ad enough of *it* ! ”

When ‘er screw begins to kick,
Though we’re silly an’ we’re sick,
Why, the bangin’ and the boom
Of the blanky engine-room—

“ Thud-er-ud-er-ud !

Cuss-yer-bones-an’-blood ! ”

It will make us good an’ well,
An’ we’ll give ‘er bunkers ‘ell

In the mornin’.

’Twill be pretty blue an’ white,
An’ I’ll get to sleep all right
To the music of the shaft
An’ the racket fore an’ aft ;

The House of the Winds

For I've left me grief ashore—
Let go for'ard,
Let go for'ard,
She was peachy pink, an' white,
An' I wonder who to-night—
“Let go for'ard,
Let go for'ard,
I—won't—do—that—any—more.”

There's a cure for you an' me,
An' it's called the Open Sea, . . .
I 'ave fell from 'igh estate,
But I'll stand up square and straight
In the mornin',
An' the ugly thing that's me
Will be bully of the sea
In the mornin'.

They 'ave shaken ev'ry fist,
An' the girls 'ave all been kissed,
“Let go for'ard,
Let go for'ard!
An' 'eave a-way aft!”
The smoke pours from 'er funnel,
There's a rumble in the tunnel,
Of the damned old shaft.

‘ Let Go For’ard ! ’

Now it’s hi ! the open way,
And it’s hail the morrow day !
An’ a hundred miles from shore,
Let go for’ard,
Let go for’ard—
“ I WON’T get drunk any more ! ”

Boney

I MET, one day, with Boney,
By chance beside the Sea ;
No gay-garbed youth and tony
Might my acquaintance be ;
For Truth's sweet sake, I own he
Was e'en a Portugee,

Who schnapper, bream, and tailer
Purveyed for loaves or beers.
A fisher now ; a sailor
He'd been in other years,
When old Ben Boyd, the whaler,
Had use for harpooneers.

Outside the hostel, loudly
The passing ships a-gleam
With paint and brasswork proudly
Went up or down the stream ;
Each dockyard miss avow'dly
A serving-maid of Steam.

The Age of Iron round us
In clash and clamour lay ;

Boney

And strict convention bound us
To methods of To-day ;
Yet Fancy somehow found us
And bore us far away.

We each were scant of money
That morn beside the sea ;
With pert contempt Enone
Served out our 'thrippenny'—
One rum set up by Boney,
And one set up by me.

Hard hit by Fate, together
We spake of other shores,
And saw a white surf feather
His far-off high Azores,
Where, in wild Western weather,
The loud Atlantic roars.

And then—not greatly caring
For either place or time—
But back in mem'ry faring
To other land and clime,
All scorned convention daring,
I hummed a deep-sea rhyme !

The House of the Winds

He met it at the chorus,
That half-forgotten song ;
The new world lay before us ;
For either right or wrong
We rolled—our glasses o'er us—
The old world right along !

*“ Then, oh, I've got to leave you,
Though all the winds may blow ;
Don't let my parting grieve you,
Shell-ho, my lass, shell-ho ;
I'm sorry to deceive you,
But I am bound to go.”*

With shame I'm called to own he
Was 'low' as I was 'high'—
No virtuoso Boney,
And no Caruso I—
The scorn of fair Enone
Was written in her eye.

We roared that chantey over,
With ne'er a windlass pawl—

Boney

The chantey of the lover,
Who hears the deep seas call,
The old carousing rover
Beneath its topmasts tall.

The Parting

I CANNOT bear the pain, dear lass ;
I cannot let you go !
Around the capstan head they pass,
Ye ho ! my lads, ye ho !

Oh ! every thought stabs like a knife,
And ev'ry breath is pain ;
You poured the sunlight in my life—
The dark night calls again.

Dear lass,
I cannot let you go ;
I will not let you go, dear lass ;
I dare not let you go.

The wind blows East, the wind blows West ;
Cold blows the wind for me ;
The pairing gulls upon the crest
Are better off than we.
I would that we lay breast to breast
To-night beneath the sea.

That lips of love should ever meet
In kisses born of fire !

The Parting

Oh! tramp my heart beneath your feet,
And crush me to the mire ;
But let me taste once more the sweet,
Glad cup of my desire !

I cannot bear the pain, dear lass ;
I will not let you go !
Around the capstan head they pass,
Ye ho! ye ho! ye ho!

The Stoke-hole

NOW the tropics lie a-dreaming
 'Mid their summer seas divine ;
 Phalanxed rollers, proudly creaming
 In a pluméd cohort line,
As the tourist ship goes steaming
 To the Islands, all a-shine.

There's a grand piano playing
 Dainty operatic airs ;
There's a travelled couple saying
 Sugared nothings on the stairs ;
And the gilded purser's maying
 With the fairest of his fares.

There are lots of fruits and ices,
 And abundance of champagne ;
There are condiments and spices,
 There are whiskies squashed and plain
For the Venuses and Vices
 Sailing pleasant o'er the main,

There's a Devil down in Hades—
 How his sweating stokers scream

The Stoke-hole

In a manner lords and ladies
 Could not even dimly dream ;
There's a Devil down in Hades,
 And his Christian name is—Steam.

By an iron ventilator
 In the upper deck of Hell,
Some seraphic strayed spectator
 Might, from indications, tell
That 'twas warm at the Equator,
 Where his damned inferiors dwell.

So, the passenger, in suction,
 As his choice Havana draws,
Could, by similar deduction,
 Learn from plain effect and cause
That the Stoke-hole's hot construction
 Brings its own climatic laws.

But, though sympathy's a treasure—
 As the preachers strive to show—
Yet the traveller of leisure
 On these minions down below,
Has a somewhat scanty measure
 Of that treasure to bestow.

The House of the Winds

For his gay saloon, like Heaven,
Is so far and far away ;
Where the lights fall soft and even,
And the saints and angels play ;
Where the silken Virtues seven
Sit enthronéd all the day.

But the seven vulgar Vices
In their fiery regions dwell ;
They are left to their devices,
And they frizzle good and well ;
For there's neither wine nor ices
In the Stoke-hole, nor in Hell.

When you're leaning o'er the railing
Of your floating Paradise
(Like a blessed Virtue, sailing
By the virtue of a Vice),
Just remember, you're prevailing
Through the Devil's sad device.

Oh, my lady, pray remember,
'Mid your flutters and your sighs—
That it ain't no cool September
For the Stoker as he fries

The Stoke-hole

In a climate where the ember
Of old Tophet never dies.

Yes, your lordship, PLEASE remember—
From December to December—
That the Stoke-hole ALWAYS fries.

A Tale of Twenty Men

A SAILOR from the salty South—and
such as sailors be—

A sailor from the briny North, they
met upon the quay.

“Ho! messmate there, what cheer? What
ho! Here be two comrades met,
From ramping wind and roaring sea, both God-
delivered yet.”

“But where’s the news, and how’s the news,
and what’s the last from hell?

With beer between and pipe between, what
tales be there to tell?

From here and there; from everywhere that
ships and sailors go,

What things of Love, and Drink, and Death,
and fellowship dost know?

“How look the girls of Liverpool, the belles of
New Orleans?

How tastes the taste of British junk or Boston
pork-and-beans?

A Tale of Twenty Men

Is fever rife at Rio yet? What boats be outward bound?

Has any beggar got a berth? Is any beggar drowned?"

.

A lassie waits by Plymouth Pier; another at Kinsale,

And I must leave my missus here, God's glory!
when I sail;

But pork and beans is beans and pork, and
junk is junk alway,

And our old tub she turned keel up, last year
off Table Bay!

She'd tumbled round the north and south, she'd
wallowed east and west;

She'd been a clipper in her day and paced it
with the best;

Her staunch oak ribs have stood the brunt of
North Atlantic seas,

When oft and oft the Devil sat aloft on her
cross-trees.

We fetched her out across the world and
brought her home to berth;

The House of the Winds

We took her in, we took her out, to ev'ry port
on earth ;

We dragged her round the frozen Horn, we
slung her through the Strait ;

We slewed her at the Hobs of Hell and never
scratched a plate.

We drove her down to Beelzebub—our devils
all in line—

Then brought her up beside the Pit and hitched
her with a twine,

A tow-line's length from Kingdom Come,
amidst the hiss and roar,

We turned about, all sober men, and coaxed
her off the shore.

We've seen her flaunt her figure-head at zenith
in her climb,

Then drop her bowsprit in the trough and
point it at the slime

One hundred fathoms underneath, where
should have been her keel,

With two tied sailor-men, by God ! half-fainting
at her wheel.

A Tale of Twenty Men

She's wallowed through the inky night, with
never star to guide,
She's seen the sea-fires glow and burn and
heard the surges glide ;
She's seen the black and lonely waste ; she's
seen the waste sun lit ;
And dipped to greet the ruddy Day—and rose
to welcome it.

We've watched the day-god drop athwart the
distant sea-line dim,
And with the moonlight in our wake, due West
we've followed him.

We've heard and seen, and seen and heard !
Strange tales have we to tell,
Who've looked five oceans in the face and
learned to know them well.

But as she lay by Plymouth town the rats went
down her side,
And when he saw, with what he knew, her
skipper cursed and cried ;
But when her owners heard his tale they laid
insurance by
And filled her up from hold to hatch and sent
her out to die.

The House of the Winds

With twenty men steeped to their lips in all
the sins of men ;

With twenty men cooped up like cats not
knowing *where* nor *when* ;

With twenty men to leave their bones, their
loves, their hopes, and fears,

Their rights and wrongs and all the rest, be-
twixt two hemispheres !

They kissed their sins ashore good-bye, and
drank their sins farewell,

Then towed her down from Plymouth town and
turned her out toward hell,

And when she kicked her heels again upon the
broad highway

They lurched aloft to watch the world and give
their sins ' Good-day.'

They dragged her down along the track, a
God-forsaken crew,

And ev'ry knot she made they laughed, but
longed to count it two !

With sweeping seas from stem to stern, with
rotten ropes and gear,

With mouldy tack for sustenance and brine
instead of beer ;

A Tale of Twenty Men

With twenty sinners keeping watch ; at graft
by night and day ;

With ten to man the pumps and curse, with
ten maybe to pray ;

With two of twenty swept astern and sent to
fight their death,

To meet the Horror in the dark that choked
them breath by breath !

They fell about her slimy deck ; they clung to
what they could ;

Amid the crash of falling spars, the wrack of
riven wood.

They drowned like rats—that would not drown
for one-and-six a day—

They died to swell a bank-account that night
off Table Bay.

Aye, twenty things of bloated shape that
sought a resting place,

And three ship-owners shaking hands by
God's own holy grace ;

Aye, twenty things of clammy kind that, very
shortly, stank,

And three well-scented Englishmen with money
in the bank.

The House of the Winds

A sailor from the salty South—and such as
sailors be—

A seaman from the briny North come out
across the sea,

With beer between and pipe between they
met, the tale to tell

Of twenty men, all sailor-men, twice damned
and sent to hell.

Meg o' Melbourne

WE brought our old tub over
With lumber, from the Sound—
One sinner jammed and crippled,
A silly bo'sun drowned ;
The shipping papers published
These items in their news
As half-a-score of sinners
Got out upon the booze.

Going large in Flinders-street
Full of Melbourne rum—
All except the bo'sun
Safe in Kingdom Come ;
All except the bo'sun
Resting deep and sound—
Seaweed in his whiskers,
And fishes swimmin' round.

"Ve go and haf our Gristmass,"
Says Olafsen, the Dane.
"Ve get as trunk as plazes,
Und never ship again ;

The House of the Winds

Ve preak der plasted record,
Ve all-so preak our leave,
Und gif der plasted skipper
Some tings to make him grieve ! ”

The Sun beyond the Yarra
Went reeling to his bed ;
The lamp-posts danced cotillions—
The drunkest one ahead ;
And when the Day was ended,
Above the cable cars
And whirling trams, collided
A multitude of stars.

She said she lived at Carlton—
Wherever that might be—
She “ didn’t take to sailors
But somehow fancied me ” :
And some strange Dago wanted
To stick me with his knife,
All in the public parlour,
To spill my precious life !

I’ve sometimes found a bottle
A useful sort of thing

Meg o' Melbourne

To grab where rows are started,
And other whiles to fling ;
I swung a full M'Ewan,
And when they cleared the deck
Meg's arms were gently clinging—
What-ho ! around my neck.

There's nothing like a shindy,
With just a smell o' blood,
To rouse the latent instincts
Of gentle Womanhood ;
When Paris was a village
Of fighting Eskimo,
When London was a covert
The Law was written so.

And since the savage nations
Grew civilized and tame,
Below the paint and varnish
The Law remains the same.
The heir of Christian meekness
When missiles start to hurl,
He mostly gets the bottle—
The Pagan gets the Girl !

The House of the Winds

So Meg and I were lovers
Three summer months or more,
A-billing and a-cooing
Like dicky birds ashore ;
Her hair was black and wavy,
Her eyes were hazel-brown—
A pearl of tribulation
Was Meg o' Melbourne town.

“ You mustn't go a-roving,
A-roving on the Sea,
But chuck the game for ever
And bide, dear heart, with me.”
“ I will not go a-roving,
I'll stay ashore with you,
I've known some other women,
But this is Love—and true ! ”

“ We'll rent a little cottage
With garden plot and stove,
And all night long we'll sugar
Our brimming cup of Love ! ”
She witched me with a whisper,
She snared me with a touch—

Meg o' Melbourne

Two wives across the water,
They didn't matter much.

I took a little shanty
Way out in Williamstown,
And Meg and I were married,
What-ho! and settled down,
And seven bob at lumping
A day I sometimes made,
Yes, seven bob at lumping—
A most ungodly trade.

The story has a sequel,
Most stories of the kind,
In spite of priest or parson,
Are bound to have, you'll find ;
For all the planet over,
From Cuba to Japan,
The ancient law was written
Of Woman and of Man.

She "didn't care for sailors"—
Exceptions prove the rule—
She played the fickle lady,
I played the howling fool ;

The House of the Winds

“Three months without the option”—
The landsmen know the law ;
I never studied statutes,
And—broke her landsman’s jaw.

I burst the happy dove-cage,
A woeful deed to do,
But other brutes have done it ;
And so, mayhap, might you
If, witched by hair of splendour
And snared by eyes of brown,
You saw good resolutions
Go bung in Melbourne town.

The Lover and his Lady,
The Dove-cot and the Dream,
A little drip of Heaven,
A little sip of cream,
The Jay-hawk and the Pigeon,
Since e’er the World began
‘Two women’ spell Gehenna—
Likewise, ‘another man.’

The story wears a sequel,
And deep of hull she lies

Meg o' Melbourne

With maze of spars and cordage
Uprearing to the skies ;
And empty slop-chests for'ard
And empty pockets here—
Oh, sing the same old ditty,
“ The Lover and his Dear ! ”

The brave new winch is clanging
A rusty capstan song,
And hi ! ye sons of . . . Someone,
Get up and shift along !
Get up, ye sore-head sinners,
And haul your shore-lines home,
To-night we'll set the watches
Across the Tasman foam.

Oh, “ Whisky for my Johnny,”
And oh, the steady breeze,
To bulge her snowy tops'ls
And lilt her through the seas.
The cook about the galley,
Importantly he goes,
And from his flesh-pots steaming
A reeking fragrance flows.

The House of the Winds

The sun beyond the Yarra

Sinks steadily to bed ;

The stars in tens of thousands

Shine soberly o'erhead.

And Meg, with hair of splendour,

And eyes of hazel-brown,

Will find her consolation

To-night in Melbourne town.

The Cutter *Wongrabelle*

A Ballad of the Australian Coast

SHE lay at anchor when they brought the
news that Ned Malone
Had broken, out on 'Spotted Dog,' his
ribs and collar-bone ;
That, on a cornsack stretcher now his mates
were bearing slow
Their shattered comrade from the claim, ten
mountain miles or so.

The summer's failing heart-blood stained each
withered orchard leaf,
And winter through the umber bush bewailed
his ancient grief ;
A wolfish south wind, snarling hate, bit angrily
the flanks
Of hunted seas that sought the shores in long,
close-crowded ranks.

The bar had shallowed with the neap ; at each
outgoing tide

The House of the Winds

Swift liberated waters poured to meet the surge
outside ;
And where the tide and current met, a seethe
of froth and sand
In wild, witch cauldrons, hissing boiled, be-
stirred by some drowned hand.

John Newcombe owned the *Wongrabelle* ; and
Newcombe's daughter May
Looked seaward from the window-pane with
strange set eyes that day—
A rosy lass with laughing lips, brown-armed,
and blithe, and strong,
As any girl of twenty-year, that iron coast
along.

The foam below Cape Everard was not more
light and free ;
Nor might the black swan on the lake as wildly
graceful be ;
But to the lads who paid her court, and
dreamed she might be won,
She shone as distant as the hills of Nadji in
the sun.

The Cutter *Wongrabelle*

Yet he was tall and he was young, broad-
shouldered, brave, and high,
Full dowered with the manly gifts that glad a
woman's eye ;
And, but a week ago, he'd come with Love's
old tale to tell—
Lloyd Fletcher, out of Twofold Bay, who ran
the *Wongrabelle*.

The moon that evening like a globe of amber
o'er the floor
Of level waters slowly rose to light from shore
to shore
A mermaid's dance. Inverted, as by giant
hands at play,
The star-crowned shadows of the hills, deep-
sunken, dreaming, lay.

And all the inlet seemed to thrill—warm, still,
and passionate—
With soft glad echoes of the song that bids
Life love and mate ;
Thus had he told his tender tale, and she, in
wilful way,
Not knowing yet her heart mayhap, pronounced
a school-girl "Nay."

The House of the Winds

He turned his heel ; and down the track that
found a grassy shore

She watched a form whose shadow strode in
seeming grief before ;

And once she whispered, half aloud, " Come
back," and once again

Her breath had seemed to stab her side in
quick, half-pleasant pain.

But woman's whim and woman's way are like
the tracks of God,

That lie beyond the outer stars, unknown and
e'er untrod,

What secret springs gush through her soul
—all mud, or fresh and clear ;

The minds of men at most surmise to either
bless or fear.

And now on beaches spray-obscured the hollow
rollers tolled

A Dead March in the scudded morn ; a falling
glass foretold

Worse weathers hatching in the south, but
level seas or high,

A wounded man must gain relief, or else the
man must die.

The Cutter *Wongrabelle*

For fifty miles of bridle track, thro' forest and
divide,

With ranges piled in broken lines, no injured
man might ride ;

By fifty miles of stormy coast the port of Eden
lay,

As well they knew, who bare him down, that
winter morning grey.

John Newcombe shook his hoary head and
cleared his husky throat—

“God knows I'm willing, men, to risk, and
double risk, the boat ;

But human life's a diff'rent thing ; there's no
man near or far

Would dare to take a craft to-day to yonder
cruel bar.

The wind is blowing half a gale and fresh'ning
from the south,

And if she chanced to cross the reef she'd
barely live it out ;

I'd risk my ship but not the rest ; God help
your injured man,

But he must bide and take his chance ; we'll
nurse him best we can.”

The House of the Winds

Cold silence fell upon the crowd. Then, self-contained and slow,
Lloyd Fletcher spoke, "I'll face her out if any chap will go
With me to tend this wounded man ; but, let him understand,
Who puts his feet on yonder deck his life takes in his hand."

Before the words had left his mouth, bull-roaring through his beard
His prior claim and privilege, Tom Shannon volunteered.
Nor did they cross his Celtic will, for well those miners knew
That kinship's tie and mateship, too, long years had bound the two.

"Now fifty sovereigns from the boys," cried swarthy 'Four-ounce Jim,'
"Yon skipper lad shall have for this. Aye, either sink or swim"—
Lloyd Fletcher stayed him at the word—"My lads, by God above,
I take no payment from your hands, *this trip I do for love.*"

The Cutter *Wongrabelle*

His eyes were on May Newcombe's face, and
as the words outran

She bent to hide her tell-tale cheeks above the
stricken man,

And deftly smoothed his pillow down, and bid
his heart be brave ;

But other sign of what she felt, if feel she
might, ne'er gave.

They grouped upon the shore to watch, with
anxious eyes, afar

The *Wongrabelle*, of twenty tons, face bravely
to the bar.

"God keep her engine going good, her quick
ignition sure ;

God aid the dynamo," they prayed, "and hold
the shaft secure."

Great combers thundered down the beach, and
at the entrance threw

Their curling weight of waters green, as further
out she drew.

She passed the channel points at last, and then,
with sickened soul,

May saw her meet with pouring decks the high
incoming roll.

The House of the Winds

"She's on the bar," John Newcombe cried,
and wrung his wrinkled hands.
"She's gone!" they sobbed. "She's not! She
lifts! Oh, God, he's struck the sands!"
May Newcombe's fingers bruised her palms;
the sky grew darkened then;
And women sobbed and curses rose from
mouths of anguished men.

They saw her rally in the spume. She
staggered, shook, uprose,
Like some game bantam pugilist from quick
and heavy blows.
One mighty roller rose ahead; then, slowly
lifting, curled,
And breaking with a roar of doom its full
weight on her hurled.

The women turned their heads away. The
seconds lagged like years;
Then, like a wounded duck, that dives and
lamely reappears,
Dismasted, swept, but floating still and on a
moving keel,
The *Wongrabelle* came gamely up, with
Fletcher at her wheel.

The Cutter *Wongrabelle*

She dived a hollow trough adown, and, on a
rising wave,

Went out across that awful bar, the little cutter
brave ;

And had the echoes not been lost amid the
hiss and roar

The gallant Fletcher might have heard them
cheering from the shore.

May Newcombe tore with joyous laugh, and
flung its fragments high

Toward Eden Town, the pencilled scrawl that
bore his curt 'Good-bye.'

Then on she passed, and down she passed, and
through the paddock gate

Went out and called like bells a-ring her black
mare, Bonny Kate.

The saddle to her silken side was e'er so
quickly flung ;

The bridle on her glossy neck by deft hands
gently hung ;

Then straight she rode and fast she rode the
hills and gullies o'er,

Her house frock flying in the wind, and ne'er
a hood she wore.

The House of the Winds

She found her journey's end ere noon—then
wrote a note and turned
Her homeward way with eyes alight and
cheeks that redly burned,
For down the line to Twofold Bay the Morse
was clicking free—
“God bless the *Wongrabelle*, and you—come
back and marry me.”

He wed her at the Christmastide, and Ned
Malone was gay
Enough to stumble through a dance, the good
bush gossips say ;
But down the coast and round the coast the
mates and captains tell
How Fletcher brought across the bar his cutter
Wongrabelle.

A Capstan Chantey

WHAT did the captain say to the cook
When the ship went down the river?
I've left my girl in Melbourne town,
Her hair was black and her eyes were brown;
And I'll love my girl for ever."
Wey-ho! We'll love the girls for ever!

What did the cook to the captain say
When the ship went down the river?
"I've left my gal in Melbourne too,
Her hair was gold and her eyes were blue;
And I'll love my gal for ever."
Wey-ho! We'll love the gals for ever!

What did the crew at the capstan sing
As the old tank nosed the river?
"We've left our gals in Melbourne town,
With eyes of blue and eyes of brown;
And we'll love our gals for ever."
Hey! We will forget them never!

What did the cook to the captain say
As the ship came down the river?

The House of the Winds

“ I’ve left my gal in London town,
Her hair is black and her eyes are brown,
And I’ll love my gal for ever.”

What did the captain say to the cook
As the ship swung down the river ?

“ I’ve left my girl in London too,
Her hair is gold and her eyes are blue,
And I’ll love my girl for ever.”

What did the crew at the capstan sing ?
Nothing at all but the same old thing
As the ship came down the river ;

“ We’ve left our loves in London town,
And some were black and some were brown,
But we’ll love our loves for ever.”

L’ENVOI

So blow your money, my bullies all
(The old tank’s down the river),
Blow your money and knock it down ;
For some are short and some are tall,
And some are black and some are brown,
And the world goes round for ever.

The Fleets

THE Black Finn lay in his bunk agasp—
Sore fretted his soul for flight ;
“I owed thee a favour once,” said he,
“Bend down till I give thee sight!” . . .
He touched his eyes where the death-films
spread, then clammily touched he mine—
“Now, open the port-hole wide,” he cried,
“and repayment shall be thine!”

The night was crowned with a lakh of stars ;
but west, where the sun had died,
His blood burned red at the sea-line yet, and
sorrowful mourned the tide. . . .
This was the gift of the dying Finn : A-cover-
ing all the Seas,
I saw the ships of the Seas, in line, come over
the centuries.

I heard them bringing their anchors up in the
harbours of Cockayne,
I heard them laying their anchors down at the
Blessed Isles again ;

The House of the Winds

The corposants at their mast-heads glowed.
Betimes, as they passed me by,
I saw the stars through their sails afar, shine
dim in the lower sky!

The Ancient Sire in his fire-scooped bole,
rowed first through the falling dusk—
His flint axe-head by a tough thong tied, his
spear of the mammoth tusk:
And o'er the boom of the brooding waves, I
heard as he paddled on
The hungry growl of the Great Cave Bear, the
tramp of the Mastodon.

The echoes died in a voice of crowds as out
from the Tigris' mouth
The bulrush boat of a Bagdad sheik came roll-
ing her cargo South;
Her strong palm wine in its earthen jars, her
dates on their green leaves laid,
To passion the lord of Babylon, and pleasure
the Hittite maid. . . .

Soft fell the clink of a brazen bell, and under
our counter passed

The Fleets

A quaint-built craft of acanthus wood, on her
twin acanthus mast
A papyrus sail, all lotus-flowered ; reclined in
its shade a girl
With deep, orb'd eyes of the despot East, and
a mouth of rose and pearl. . . .

I heard the roll of the Prakritt speech, and a
galley tall rode on,
All clinker-built of a cedar trunk from the
Mount of Lebanon :
Her deep keel leaped to the mighty sweep of
the thrashing three-banked oars,
As she held away from the pirate hands that
itched by the Tuscan shores.

“ But this,” I cried, “ from the dockyards wide
of the blue Piræus swung ;
These be the men who have wrought with
stone and written in Homer’s tongue.”
I hailed them loud as their brave ship passed,
and the echoes answered me :
“ Oh sang the seas when the world was young ;
sweet was the song of the sea ;

The House of the Winds

The days are dead and the days will die, but
liveth the Odyssey."

.

The Black Finn muttered a Nor'land spell and
groaned like a dog in pain—

"I owed thee a favour twice," said he, "look
out on the seas again!"

I looked, and lo! from the Ten Lost Isles to
the Island of San Chen-San,

From Hy-Brasil to the Port of Lob, the host
of their numbers ran :

Tied in the link of a thousand years, the Celt,
in his skin canoe,

Rode prow and prow with a Kentish chief hard
pulled by a painted crew ;

And, linked again by a thousand years, a proa
with her sail aback

Rode neck and neck with the Hunting Man in
his walrus-hide kayak.

The long, beaked neck of a Punic barge shot
by like a scared sea-snake,

The Fleets

Her lights ablaze on the brazen helmets of the
Latin foe a-wake,
Abiding not to his haughty hail they galloped
along the foam,—
“The gods that ye know avail ye not! Give
heed to the gods of Rome!”

Aye, now the Cub of the Wolf at Rome a-
cleaving the seas doth go,
To clear the road to the Westward Isles that
her traders' keels may know
The weight of the British hides and wool and
the Western fish and game,
That garnish the proud patrician board of the
Proud Patrician Dame.

.

The Black Finn moaned on his bed of Death.
“Make haste ere I go,” he cried;
“A favour thrice have I owed to thee; now
open the port-hole . . . wide!” . . . :
From the silken South, the sinewed North,
from the shining East and West,
With their pale corpse-candles all alight and
the four Winds all at rest.

The House of the Winds

They drifted in from the Bay of Sleep and the
Gulf of Acheron,

They drifted out from the Isle of Souls ; from
the Isles of Avalon ;

They steamed from the frozen Dumslaf Land,
away in the frozen seas ;

From Fly-away-Cape, in Isle-au-Sein, and the
famed Hesperides.

The outer plain with their host was hid, and
the inner plain was filled

With ev'ry rig that the seas have known ; with
every make and build.

A mat-sailed junk of the China Coast and a
white-washed Arab dhow

They passed to port and to starboard on with
the liner built of now.

The narrow ships of the Creekmen bold spread
their strong black raven wings,

With blue-sailed boats of the Irish bays and
fleets of the Saxon Kings.

A bucentaur, with her long red oars and a high-
decked hull of Spain,

They rode with the tubs that traded wool for
the wine of Aquitaine ;

The Fleets

With Black Sea tubs of the Genoese, with the
cruisers of Algiers,
With slavers, pirates, and corsair-men in their
fighting privateers ;
With koffs which carried the Dutchman's goods
langsyne to the Javanese,
And Mogul's ships that were fain to yield to
the plundering Portuguese.

The fleets of the Nations gathered in, the fleets
of the Nations grew,
But the Fleet of the Little Islands spread till
they counted six to two.
Along the Downs and abreast the Sands, like
a great cloud came they forth,
And some went West to the Seas Unknown,
and some to the South and North.

Then heard I a Voice from over-seas, and the
Voice in thunders spake :
“ The spoil of the world is his for aye who
courage shall find to take ;
The codfish spawns on the Banks for him ;
the bees of the Alp slopes toil,
The fruits of the fruiting Earth are his ; the
corn, the wine, and the oil ! ”

The House of the Winds

A silence fell on the Nations all. Then a
strong-tongued voice up-spoke :
“With grammars and guns we go, oh Lord!
with the Heart of Steel and Oak ;
The plunder of Antwerp first we take, but,
Lord, ere our flags be furled,
We'll spoil the spoilers of all the earth and
loot the loot of the world.

Our English blondes in the rajah's silks shall
shine as they walk arrayed,
Our workmen's hands they are deft to build,
and our hearts be unafraid ;
We've lack o' sable for Whitehall folk, and
port for our noble dames,
And the weed that grows where Raleigh went
—in spite of our good King James!

The Doge of Venice may bite his beard, and
counsel his lords profound,
The Turk hath greeted our Tudor Queen, and
the *Susan's* outward bound ;
She's ta'en a cargo of London truck, and her
skipper trusts in God,

The Fleets

The length o' stroke and the strength of oak
and his great guns thirty-odd. . . ."

.
I saw them spreading and spreading far, yea,
over the utmost seas :

The black-hulled catts of the Steelyard firms,
and the Livery Companies ;

The sailing-ships of the First Great Queen, the
steaming ships of the Last,

By the rogues of the realm all stoutly manned,
and the red flag at the mast.

The last to cross was a battleship of a clean
ten thousand tons,

A two-foot wall of twice-tempered steel and a
grinning tier of guns ;

Her triple-expansion engines throbbed at touch
of her engineers,

She lit the seas with her bright arc-light and
blotted away the years.

She hulled them down on St Brandon's Road,
and I watched them one by one,

Till the last great liner thundered out, and the
last drab tramp was gone.

The House of the Winds

The stars lay still on the lonely seas, I turned
to the Finn, and said :

“ Whither in truth have the good ships gone ? ”
—but the lean Black Finn was dead.

Johnny's Church

THEY'VE broken up the meeting,
They've called the Consuls home,
The shoreward drums are beating
Like pulses in the gloom.
The torn, red flag of story
Is flapping high for glory,
Or waving low for doom.

Now, who's to give the text out,
And lead the choir to-day?
Now who's to read the text out,
And tell the band to play?
They've done the talk and writing,
But who's to do the fighting,
And make the fighting pay?

Oh, don't you hear him cheering?
Oh, can't you hear him swear?
In line o' battle nearing
The scowling squadrons there!
The heavy guns he's sighting,
For of the Lion's fighting
He takes the lion's share.

The House of the Winds

Now once they asked a teacher—
And strange the sermon runs—
For Johnny was the preacher,
The Deacon of the Guns ;
The world had need of teaching,
And Johnny did the preaching ;
His pulpit housed the guns.

His church is paved with powder,
And roofed with grape and shell,
And from its belfry louder
The peals of battle knell,
With pointed steel-shot singing,
And red-mouthed rifles ringing,
In volleys, for the bell.

His text, in bright lines written,
Gleams o'er the chancel grey—
Two glowing words, war-litten,
Two words—' Trafalgar Bay '—
Two words that die not ever,
Two words that burn for ever,
Two words—' Trafalgar Bay ! '

So when our pocket money
Around we freely fling,

Johnny's Church

We'll stand a drink for Johnny,
Churchwarden to the King ;
For Jack's a handy teacher,
A most converting preacher,
When loud the broadsides ring.

'Tis his that text to glisten
The smoke of conflict through ;
And all the world will listen,
And hold his sermon true ;
If Johnny goes a-teaching
His lesson once again,
If Johnny goes a-preaching
With glory in his train.

A Ballad of the Captains

WHERE are now the Captains
Of the narrow ships of old—
Who with valiant souls went seeking
For the Fabled Fleece of Gold ;
In the clouded Dusk of Ages,
In the Dawn of History,
When the ringing songs of Homer
First re-echoed o'er the Sea ?

Oh, the Captains lie a-sleeping
Where great iron hulls are sweeping
Out of Suez in their pride ;
And they hear not, and they heed not,
And they know not, and they need not
In their deep graves far and wide.

Where are now the Captains
Who went blindly through the Strait,
With a tribute to Poseidon
A libation poured to Fate ?
They were heroes giant-hearted,
That with Terrors, told and sung,
Like blindfolded lions grappled,
When the World was strange and young.

A Ballad of the Captains

Oh, the Captains brave and daring,
With their grim old crews are faring
Where our guiding beacons gleam ;
And the homeward liners o'er them—
All the charted seas before them—
Shall not wake them as they dream.

Where are now the Captains
From bold Nelson back to Drake,
Who came drumming up the Channel,
Haling prizes in their wake ?
Where are England's fighting Captains
Who, with battle flags unfurled,
Went a-rieving all the rieviers
O'er the waves of all the world ?

Oh, these Captains, all confiding
In the strong right hand, are bidding
In the margins, on the Main ;
They are shining bright in story,
They are sleeping deep in glory,
On the silken lap of Fame.

Where are now the Captains
Who regarded not the tears

The House of the Winds

Of the captured Christian maidens
Carried, weeping, to Algiers?
Yes, the swarthy Moorish Captains,
Storming wildly 'cross the Bay,
With a dead hidalgo's daughter
As a dower for the Dey?

Oh, those cruel Captains never
Shall sweet lovers more dis sever,
On their forays as they roll ;
Or the mad Dons curse them vainly,
As their baffled ships, ungainly,
Heel them, jeering, to the Mole.

Where are now the Captains
Of those racing, roaring days,
Who of knowledge and of courage,
Drove the clippers on their ways—
To the furthest ounce of pressure,
To the latest stitch of sail,
'Carried on ' before the tempest
Till the waters lapped the rail?

Oh, the merry, manly skippers
Of the traders and the clippers,
They are sleeping East and West,

A Ballad of the Captains

And the brave blue seas shall hold them,
And the oceans five enfold them
In the havens where they rest.

Where are now the Captains
Of the gallant days ago?
They are biding in their places,
And the Great Deep bears no traces
Of their good ships passed and gone.
They are biding in their places,
Where the light of God's own grace is,
And the Great Deep thunders on.

Yea, with never port to steer for,
And with never storm to fear for,
They are waiting wan and white,
And they hear no more the calling
Of the watches, or the falling
Of the sea rain in the night.

Thine Ain Countree

SHE was squalid and unlovely, and her
tattered jib and brown,
Like a greasy, vulgar dish-clout in the
evening light flapped down—
But our hearts went out to meet her,
And our glad souls rose to greet her,
And we cheered that little trader from the
wharves of Sydney town.

It is ever what you're bred to
In your own old line ;
It is ever what you're led to
Sin' the days of Auld Lang Syne.

We had climbed the purple ranges ; crossed
the level plains and wide ;
We had ridden with the stockmen on the
burning Western side ;
But we hungered for the daughters
Of the Overlords of Waters—
For the thunder of the breakers, and the
tumble of the tide.

Thine Ain Countree

Let the lion to his desert ;
Live the oyster on his shore :
But the hunger of the exile
It shall hurt him evermore.

She was innocent of outline ; she was ugly and
unclean ;
She was not a painted liner or the pride of
Aberdeen ;
But it gripped us as we neared her,
And we gat us up and cheered her,
For the sake of what we cared for, and the
sake of What-Has-Been.

Oh, the kitchen-maid's a lady when the lady's
at the ball,
And the palm-tree in the desert is the fairest
of them all—
Shall the heart forget its true love
For the glamour of the new love ?
Shall the grapes from thorns be garnered, or
the figs from thistles fall ?

And she told us of the waters, and she spake
of open seas,

The House of the Winds

When she grumbled down the river with her
engines all a-wheeze ;

Then our hearts went to those places,
And the tears were on our faces,
For a man is but an infant when it comes to
things like these.

It is ever what you're bred to,
And you find it as you go
That you're tempted back and led to
Little things—of ' long ago.'

So we followed her in fancy till she swung
across the bar,
And we saw her lights a-blinking on the heave
and roll afar,
By the magic fay whose touches
Turn the scullion to a duchess,
Make the kitchen-maid a lady and the tallow-
dip a star.

They shall pine beyond the rivers for the
rollers and the foam,
They shall pine beyond the rollers for the
rivers as they roam :

Thine Ain Countree

She was ugly, and we loved her,
She was nothing, but we loved her,
For she told us of our Country and she sang to
us of Home.

The Nor'-Easter

'TIS ever good and gentle,
'Tis always cool and kind
When Hell lies on the tropics,
And men go mad and blind,
The silken, soft Nor'-Easter,
The languid lady breeze
That God sends down from China,—
A dove across the seas.

A-swinging in my hammock,
Beneath a singing pine,
I hear the glad white horses
Race homeward all a-line ;
The sea spray drifting forward,
Across a dreamy reach
Of yellow sands that circle
The misty moonlit beach.

And yonder, on the sea wall,
The good fat oysters cling ;
And yonder up the river
The gluttoned black ducks wing :

The Nor'-Easter

And when the tide comes surging
Across and round the shoals,
They'll hook the hungry black bream
And spear the drifting soles.

Oh, let me clasp, Juanita,
Your loveliness again,
You wond'rous flower of Ireland,
You wond'rous fruit of Spain!
While all the stars, in splendid,
Still majesty on high,
Slow wheel and circle Westward
Across a Queensland sky.

'Twas but last night I kissed you
Along yon harbour wall;
And you, dear heart, resisted,
Resisted not at all.
And lo! those gates of Heaven,
I don't expect to see,
With sudden crash of music,
Burst open unto me.

Wild gipsy of the Beaches,
Wild daughter of the Sun,

The House of the Winds

What rover's hearts before me
Have you not coaxed and won?
For ships, ere mine, cast anchor
Below yon shallow quay,
And shipmen, too, have dallied,
My dark-eyed dream, with thee.

For Spain and Ireland's flotsam,
If Rumour whispers true,
Were sinful sire and mother,
Carissima, to you ;
And in your veins makes riot
The red, transmitted fire
That wastes the souls of wooers
On altars of Desire.

But out to-night, beloved,
With warnings dull and sour !
Whatever is is right, Love :
I'll live my fervent hour ;
And you shall be Sultana
And Queen of All the Girls,
And I shall rule, a Sultan,
This coast of Palm and Pearls.

The Nor'-Easter

Dark daughter of the Beaches,
Whose eyes are arched by night,
Whose red mouth madly beckoned
A lover to delight ;
My throbbing Soul of Passion,
Though this a 'love of shame'
Be held by pious purists—
The climate's most to blame.

For, let the pious purist
Just even so recline,
A heart beside him throbbing
Beneath a scented pine,
And let him drink the glamour
The glory of it all—
God help your gentle purist,
God guard him—lest he fall !

Across the moonlit waters
A scent of tuberose
And mangrove and magnolia
The cool Nor'-Easter blows ;
Oh, all the way from China,
From merry Kobe town,
Past Java and the Indies
This popped wind comes down.

The House of the Winds

They bless it at Port Darwin,
And round the Gulf they hail
The precious wind that bellies
The pearling lugger's sail.
Now, south from Thursday Island,
Among the coral isles,
'Tis singing, like an anthem,
For twice a thousand miles,

While lovers down the Clarence,
And lovers on the Tweed,
Drink in its virgin coolness
And on its freshness feed,—
The laughing, lush Nor'-Easter
The languid, lady breeze,
The Lord sends down from China
To glad His glowing seas.

Juanita! Oh, Juanita!
The sky is white with stars;
The surf is making music
Across the river bars.
Juanita! Oh, Juanita!
Your arms and bosom white
Would lure the proud archangels
To earth again to-night.

The Nor'-Easter

To-morrow, love, to-morrow
You'll hear the capstan bring
Our anchor from the coral,
And hear the chantey ring ;
Then, feeling for the channel,
Her tops'ls swinging low,
And bowsprit pointing seaward,
My ship, alas ! must go.

But when the light Nor'-Easter
Your face will cool and kiss,
In other nights of glory,
In other nights of bliss ;
When on a cloth of velvet
The silver stars are sown,
I'll dream of you, Juanita,
Of you—of you alone.

From Townsville unto Timor,
From Sidney round to Perth,
And round again to London,
And round and round the earth,
Beneath the Cross star-crowded,
Beneath the great North Bear,
Wherever ship shall bear me—
Your mem'ry will be there.

The House of the Winds

The wharves of Honolulu,
The quays of Callao,
Wherever cargoes carry,
Wherever sailors go ;
And on the lone, wide waters,
Beneath the lone, wide sky,
'Twill grieve me and 'twill glad me,
Beloved, 'till I die.

'Tis always good and gentle,
'Tis ever fond and kind—
The little soft Nor'-Easter,
The little lover's wind ;
The silken soft Nor'-Easter,
The languid lady breeze,
That God sends down from China
To cool His summer seas.

A Thousand Years Between

THE snow on the sleeping fir trees
Grew red in a band of light,
As the huge logs flared and beacons
Far off through a Northern night ;

Where, sprawled on their rude oak benches,
The wine-drunk Northmen tall,
Loud chorused a battle saga,
In their Viking's fire-lit hall.

The smoke-grimed roof-tree trembled
As higher the war words rang ;
In clamouring measure rising,
Attuned to an armoured clang.

Cold stars, in a steel-white glory,
Paled out in a boreal morn,
And the Night-wind carried the story
Of a warrior's son, new born.

On the shield of a bardic chieftain
Was the wolf-cub lifted high ;
And his bull-lunged kinsfolk hailed him
As the night went roaring by.

.

The House of the Winds

He played with the skulls and spearheads
When his sire, with a baresark band
Went over the seas to harry
The carlins of Engle-land.

He chafed in his high rock eyrie,
And ever his soul grew strong,
Full fed with the deeds of heroes
And story and battle song.

At length, as the seers foretold him
Man-grown, on the shingled shore,
He stood, with his youth behind him,
And the heroes' road before.

"I will hew my way to a kingdom,"
The voice in his young heart said ;
"I will set my feet to a kingdom,
Though the path of my feet runs red."

The beak^e of his black ship pointed
To the North Seas grey and deep,
As out from the wild bleak fiord
She went with her oars a-sweep.

A Thousand Years Between

And a maiden waited lonely
On the hills of Norroway,
And a maiden waited lonely
Through many a long dead day.

He fared with his fourscore fighters ;
And oft did the Erse bards sing
The deeds of a Daneland rover,
The death of a red Erse king.

The harps of the bards were wailing
Their woe in an Irish vale,
As, out on the dim Atlantic,
There faded a foeman's sail.

In the halls of their grim Valhalla
The souls of his rovers sate ;
But the Viking's son went sailing
Alone through the Western gate.

O'er scream of the wild, weird waters ;
Doomstruck, on a night-black sea,
Shouting his lone death saga
Unfeared, to his end went he.

The House of the Winds

The tiller of Earth to cover him
Hath ever his meed of mould ;
But over the deep-sea rover
The waves of the world are rolled.

.
There was neither a shout of wassail,
Nor clamour of shield and sword,
In the house of Olaf Peters
By the high-walled Norse fiord.

But a wrinkled midwife mumbled :
“ Henceforth when thy port is won
Thou wilt kiss, O Olaf Peters,
The head of thy firstborn son.”

He played on the Norland shingle,
Where a Viking's ship once lay,
This child of a nomad toiler,
This heir of a newer day.

He followed her painted funnel,
As the whaling steamer sped,
Where the light of far Fruholmen
On the breaking seas burns red.

A Thousand Years Between

And the English tourists, safely,
Came over the seas in packs,
With never a fear of blunting
The edge of a Northman's axe.

But the Voice of the Waters wooed him,
As ever her Voices may ;
And a maiden waited lonely
On the hills of Norrøway.

Yea, a maiden, watching lonely—
As many a maid hath done—
Still hopes for the glad home-faring
Of Olaf Peterson.

But a Baltic tramp, come over
For her cargo of Yankee pork,
Brought tidings of little moment
To the scribes of far New York.

'Twas merely a log-book entry,
Scrawled large by a busy mate,
Of a gale in the North Atlantic
And a foreign sailor's fate. . . .

.

The House of the Winds

Hurled to the howling surges,
Swept from a wave-washed yard,
Olaf, the young Norse seaman,
Dieth his line death hard.

Down in that black, mad vortex,
Up on the curling crests ;
Down, as his strong limbs stiffen,
Down, where the Viking rests. . . .

So to the place appointed—
One from the Days of Sword,
One from the Years of Wages,
Out of the same fiord.

Proud lord of the grand old by-road,
Poor slave of the new and mean,
They rest on the great west high road,
With a thousand years between.

They bide, at the last, together—
One from the years sublime,
One from the new years sordid,
Equals in death—and time.

A Thousand Years Between

The tiller of earth to cover him
Hath ever his meed of mould,
But over the deep-sea rover
The waves of the world are rolled.

Hulks

DIM lights shine down on the Harbour,
bright lights along the Quay ;
The watch-light slowly turneth across
the Tasman Sea—

The watch-light on its headland, that, like some
proud and great
Armed sentinel high standeth to ward the
Eastern Gate.

Glad lights burn down the fairway, and song
and shout of life
From high-hulled fleets of commerce with city
sounds make strife ;
But, moored among the shadows, while all the
world goes by,
Like cripples in some poorhouse, the old hulks
dreaming lie.

Poor pensioned paupers waiting, with tired and
aching bones,
The falling of the curtain, to rest with Davy
Jones.

Hulks

Green slime upon their sheathing, dry caulking
in their seams—

Some common daily purpose, and nightly
naught but dreams.

But if the proud, strong steamers who lightly
come and go—

Oh, if the proud, smart steamers could only
hear and know !

Or if those flounced, fast ladies, with patent
rig and gear,

If they had ears to listen, what stories might
they hear !

Yes, they might hear the wonders these brave
old hulks could tell,

If ships had tongues for speaking, if ships had
souls as well ;

For ships and men have battled around the
seven seas,

And in their hearts oft carry, who knows what
memories ?

They tell of long-dead captains, and long-gone
sailors bold,

The House of the Winds

Who fared the Treasure-Seekers to Lands of
Grief and Gold,
Who brought our English fathers across the
fearsome seas,
Who bore our Irish mothers to States and
Colonies.

They'd sing the Black-ball clippers, old Money
Wigram's fleet,
Stout barks and sterling skippers who put
unshrinking feet
In doorways deep of danger, and at the gates
of Hell
Defied the devil's legions and fought their
devil well.

They'd sing no young sea dandies, with soft
shore-going ways,
But hard-faced, hard-reared sailors of old, dead
sailing days.
They knew no patent rigging. 'Twas "Up
aloft ye fly,
And take yer flaming chances to live it out—
or die!"

Hulks

Aye, crowd her swaying ratlines, and on
t'gallant yard,

Hang on by teeth and toe nails, and curse your
chances hard.

Her scuppers green sea spewing, a good three-
quarter gale

A-whooping from the sky-line—" Aloft and
take in sail!"

And crouching on her poop there, some fifty
feet below,

The man who bossed the oceans—till fifty
years ago,

With salt crust on his whiskers and coarse
hair on his chest—

The man who sneered at Progress, and bore it
South and West.

Caps off ye longshore sailors! and let your
hands salute

The man who sowed sour sorrow that ye might
eat sweet fruit!

Caps off, ye feckless deck-hands! The grateful
engineer,

Beside his gauge glass standing, to his paternal
peer

The House of the Winds

A greasy waste-wad raises ; for if by chance
she strip

The blades from her propeller, he learns of
seamanship.

And, ladies in your cabins, with conquered seas
to hymn

Your thoughts to pleasant fancies ; through
curtained portholes dim,

Look out on yonder surges that curling fall
and break

And die in soft subsidence behind your steamer's
wake ;

And in your minds behold him lashed on the
bridge below,

Before ye sink in slumber—Oh ! he'd be glad
to know.

.

Moored deep among the shadows an old hulk
faintly hears,

Beyond the Present calling, the Voices of the
Years ;

And as a squat North-Coaster comes thumping
down the Bay,

Hulks

One moment at her moorings she tugs in
mournful way.

She sees, to port and starboard, the red light
and the green—

The jewels ocean housemaid still wears with
ocean queen.

The chart-room door falls open ; and, red cigar
to lip,

Reflective, leans against it, the skipper of the
ship.

But for'ard, in the darkness, the peering look-
out stands—

A fair-haired Swede with knowledge of foreign
seas and lands ;

His father drowned before him, two brothers
lost at sea—

Ten centuries out yonder he might a Viking be ;

Mayhap ancestral echoes, borne down along
the tide,

Now make him hold a second his rolling sailor
stride ;

And, as the old hulk visions within the gliding
light,

The House of the Winds

He waves his hand toward her and whispers
low "Good night!"

.
She hides among the shadows, dismasted, old,
unclean,

Her decks with coal-dust blackened, her copper
slimed and green ;

A pensioner of Progress, but in her roaring
days,

A white-dressed dainty lady who tripped the
waterways.

And as the new ships pass her—too proud to
care or know,

Bound in with wear of travel, bound out where
live ships go—

A strange ship-moan escapes her ; and weird
and lone she sighs,

To see once more unbounded the great, arched
water skies.

To feel once more beneath her the breathless
heave and roll

Of brave blue seas that girdle the earth from
pole to pole,

Hulks

To see the star host mirrored—so crowded and
so deep,
And watch the sea fires flicker and hear the
dolphins leap.

But, worn-out ships like men are, to whom the
drift of years
Leaves naught but recollection, the longings
and the tears.
Like dim, fast-fading visions of days that dawn
no more—
The Old Hulks in the shadows are hulks, and
nothing more.

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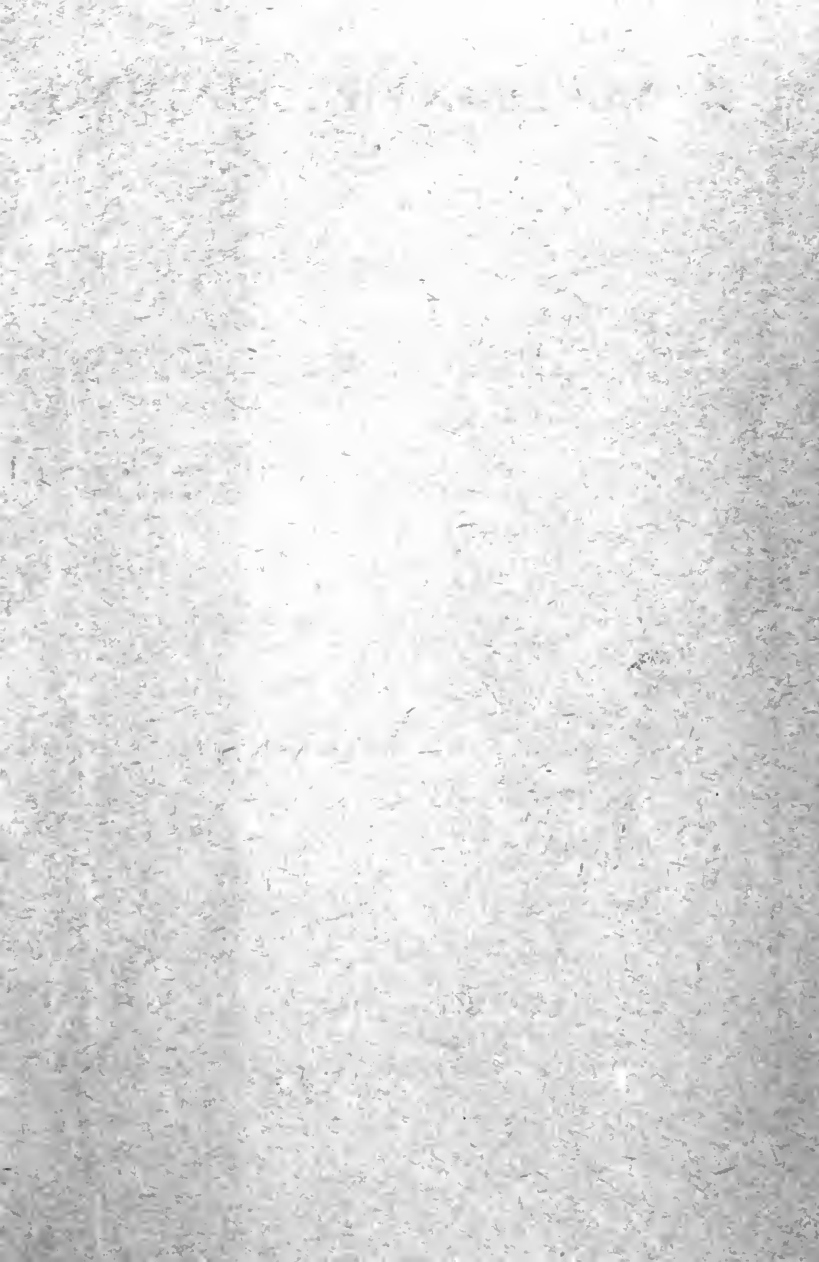
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